Manchester Fightback

Fightback against the cuts

ISSUE ONE.

Manchester Fightback was set up in November 1979 at a public meeting attended by Trade Unionists, representatives from Community organisations and other people committed to fighting cuts in public expenditure.

We believe that it is important that all cuts are fought at the local level, but in order to save all services local campaigns need to link together. We feel that we can help to provide this link.

We do not see the present round of cuts as a short term means of saving money but as a long term way of restructuring the welfare state - moving towards making health, education, housing and other services a privilege. We believe these should be rights.

We cannot afford to wait for our leaders to organise action, especially as we are allowed very little say or control over what kind of action is planned and when. People at the base of unions and local groups need to organise and fight all cuts, and fight for alternative policies to those that put profits before people. The Lambeth councillors did not at first decide to resist all cuts, they were forced into this by mass pressure from local organisations at the base. This same pressure forced their Area Health Authority to face sacking rather than cut services. It is up to US to force those in control NOT to cut services.

It is not true that public expenditure is being reduced - otherwise we would have those long promised tax cuts. More money is being poured into defence and law and

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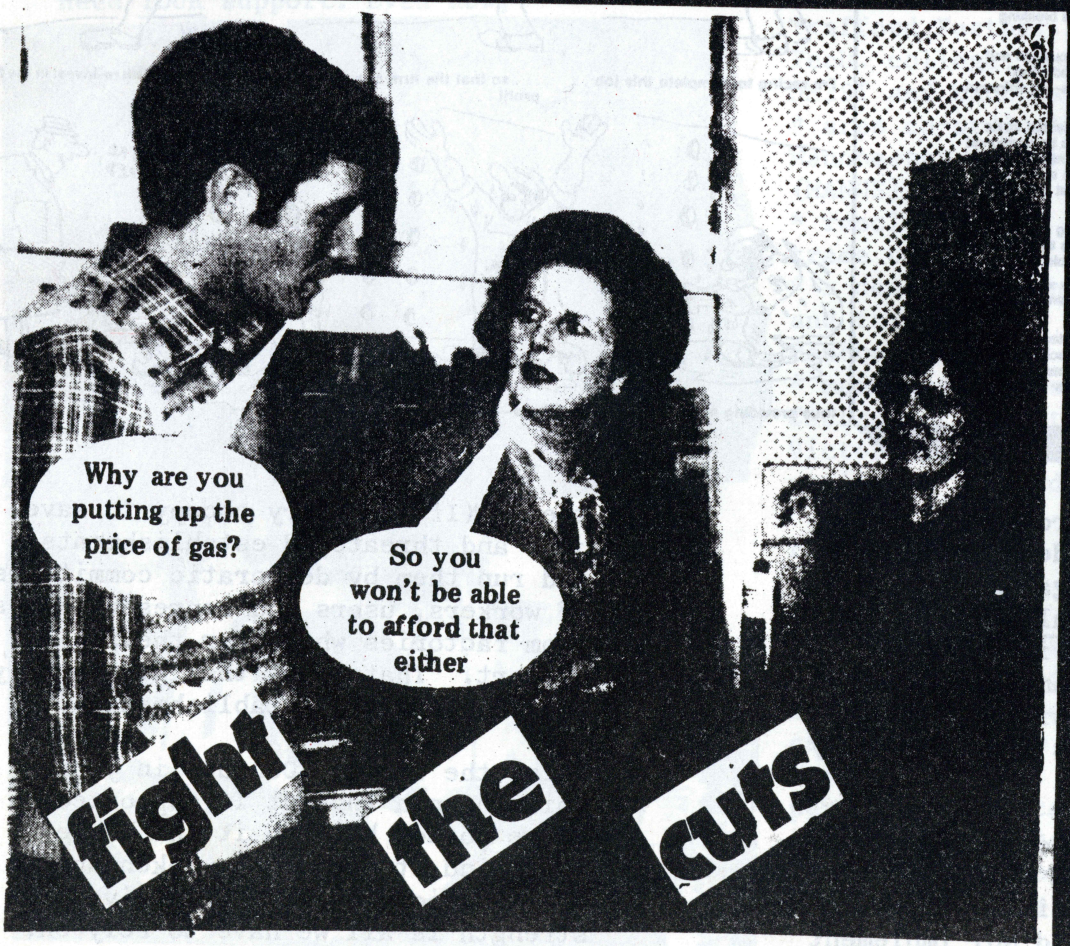

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order. In other words, money is being put into services which destroy life at the expense of those services that make life better. Believe us, money poured into defence will not save your job, your education or your health, but as the working class get poorer will defend the wealth of the rich.

1. Let us know how cuts are affecting you where you live and/or work.

2. We will help you organize a campaign by putting you in contact with people involved in fighting similar cuts, sympathetic organisations who might support you and help you find a place to hold meetings, duplicate leaflets etc.

3. Pass a resolution to support us in your organization and make sure at least one person comes along to our meetings to let us know what is going on where you are and make sure you know what is going on elsewhere.

We need each other:

Public Sector workers can not save services without the support of workers in the private sector (or the other way round.) Paid workers need the help of pensioners, women, tenants groups and others.

What you can do to fight the Cuts.

* Distribute this bulletin as widely as possible.

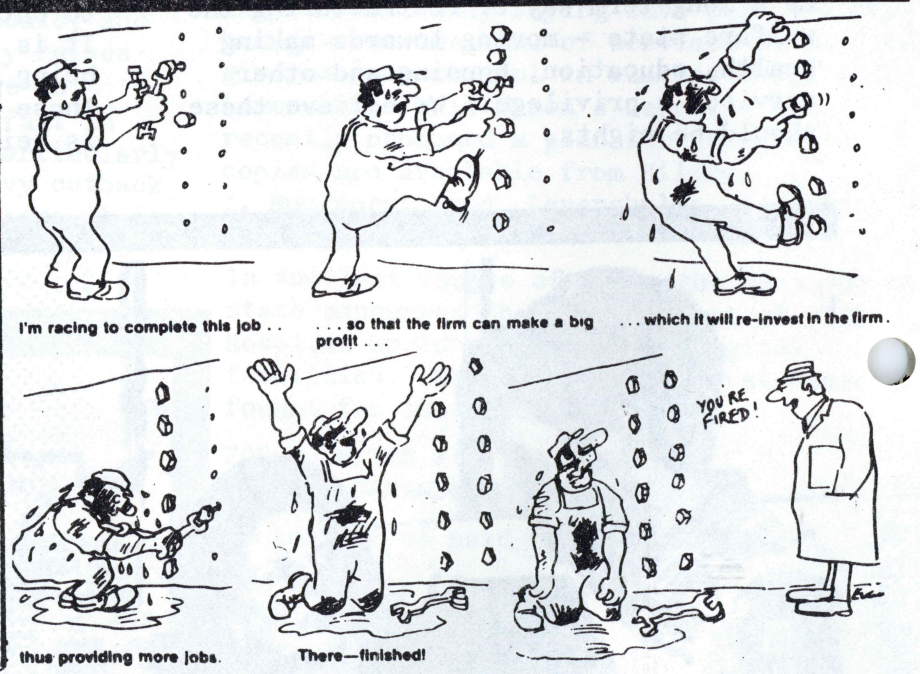
* Raise the issue in your workplace and local groups - argue for active support against cuts.

* Try to involve & forge links with as many other organisations as possible.

* SUPPORT MANCHESTER FIGHTBACK.

Code of Practice

1. No crossing of picket lines;
2. For defence of 100 per cent closed shop and for sanctions to be applied against any individuals breaking closed shop;
3. For full rank & file discussion and decision making by traditional democratic procedures—no enforced secret ballots.
4. Strikes to be run by elected strike committees. Pickets to be positioned at whatever locations necessary to win the dispute and in sufficient numbers to ensure that picket lines are observed;
5. All appeals for blacking and financial assistance for disputes to be carried out wherever practicable;
6. Support calls made by strike committees for mass and sympathy pickets;
7. No settlement of disputes without full report backs to, and decision making by, the members concerned—no enforced 'arbitration' or enforced 'official' settlements.


I'm racing to complete this job . .
. . . so that the firm can make a big profit . . .
. . . which it will re-invest in the firm.
thus providing more jobs.
There—finished!
YOU'RE FIRED!

* It may be a long hard task - argue for Trade Union leaders amd Labour Party leaders to organise lightening one day strikes of all workers as first steps towards indefinite strike action. No amount of speeches demos. or pleading will change the Tories' plans. This is, eventually, the only way we will stop them.

* If cuts are announced, workers who are expected to send out instructions or close down establishments etc., must get together and NOT implement them. (If necessary occupy to save jobs and threatened establishments and run them by democratic committees of workers, users and representatives from factories who offer their support. Thats what they did in Bury and they saved 5 establishments!)

Raise the Code of Conduct in your Union branch and get it supported. If we do not keep to it the Tories will find it easier to weaken and divide unions ! Our collective strength is all we have to rely on.

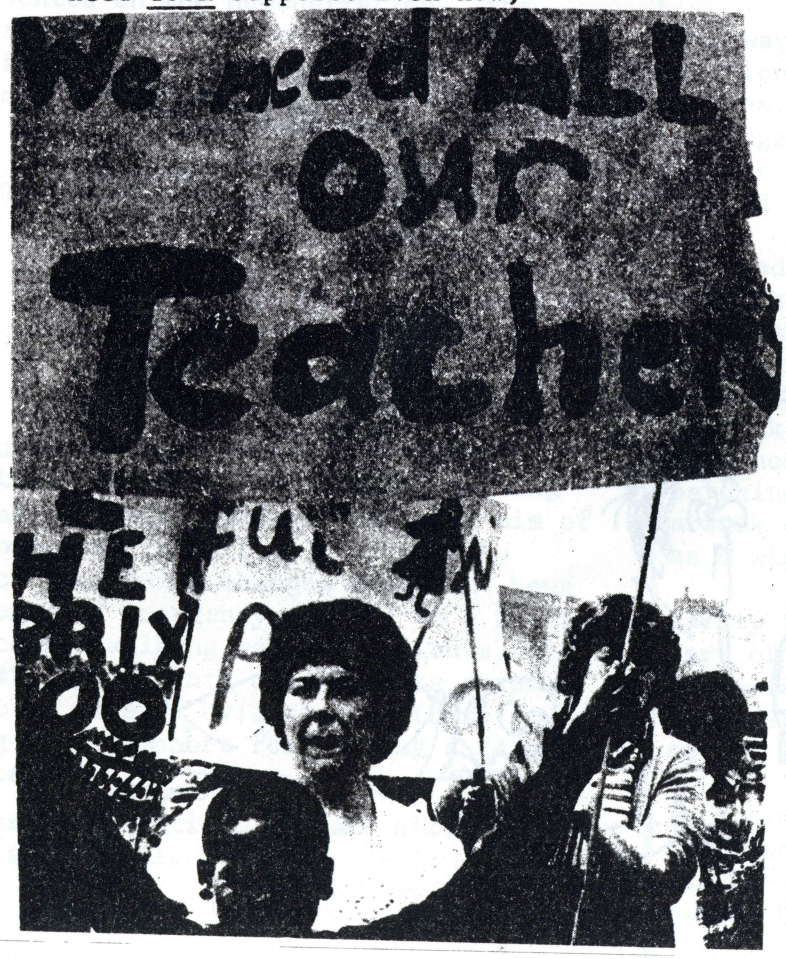
021202/AG/Manchester - Periodicals A-Z/A

education fightback 3

EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK

The past few months have seen unprecedented action by students and staff in colleges in Manchester, and throughout Britain, against education cuts. One of the main issues within this campaign has been fighting the current astronomical increases in tuition fees. These affect all students, but for overseas students represent a blatantly racist attack on their right to education. Some fees will rise from £900 to over £4000 per year, and even for "home" students will be more than doubled, to well over £1000 for some courses.

The campaign against tuition fees is a vital part of the campaign against cuts. Higher fees mean less students. Access to education is limited even further and college funding is cut yet again. This means that even more people will be thrown onto the dole and it won't just affect lecturers and students. All colleges employ cleaners, porters, technicians, secretaries, cooks, engineers etc. Hundreds, if not thousands, of these people face redundancies. That is why the campaigns against cuts in <u>all</u> colleges and against <u>all</u> tuition fee increases need <u>YOUR</u> support. Even now;



* Manchester University has had a 2% cut already and faces a 10% plus cut later this year. With inflation this could mean real cuts of 15%-25%, which means job vacancies will be frozen and redundancy plans drawn up.
* Manchester Polytechnic faces cuts of several hundred thousand pounds due to the national funding 'pool' for local authority funded colleges being cut. City of Manchester College will be similarly affected.
* Cash limits, cuts in the Manpower Services Commission and changes in priority for Inner Cities money will mean that further education colleges will have their funding slashed, many 'discretionary award' grants for students will go, tuition fees will rise and training courses, day release provision and adult education will be cut.

THE FIGHTBACK AGAINST EDUCATION CUTS

These depressing facts highlight the need for the campaign to defend education and extend not restrict educational provision. Not only has a lead been shown by the last six months' action by staff and students, but also more trade unions are now taking up the campaign. Action so far has included;
* occupations at Whythenshaw Tech. college, Trafford Further Education college, Bolton Tech. college, Manchester Polytechnic, UMIST and Manchester University;
* area co-ordination of student action by Manchester Area National Union of Students (MANUS);
* resolutions of support from college trade unions;
* a demonstration against college cuts and tuition fees through the centre of Manchester which had over 3,000 people on it.
* meetings to discuss the closure of the Centre for Educational Disadvantage (in Victoria Park), adult literacy cuts and the national 'Save Adult Education' campaign.

FUTURE ACTION

As the cuts bite even deeper so this action will need to be stepped up. The response needs to be based both in the workplace and in the community, linking trade unions, community groups and campaigning organisations together. Even this is only one part of the education fightback as schools, nurseries, playschemes etc. all need just as much attention as part of the campaign against <u>all</u> cuts.

4 Rochdale

In Rochdale, Hospital workers and the local community are fighting to save two local threatened hospitals; Springfield Park and Northern Children's Hospital. Staff at both hospitals are determined not to see these facilities closed and have organised an action committee. They are working with the public action committee which was started at a public meeting held on 20th November. This was 'the night of the fog' but nevertheless 150 people were concerned enough to brave the weather. The Community Health Council is supporting these campaigns.

Springfield Park is set in beautiful grounds and used mainly for patients who have to stay in hospital for a long time after operations. Undoubtedly, if these patients have to stay in the larger hospitals, waiting lists will grow. One fear is that Springfield Park is round the corner from Highfield, a private hospital used by local Consultants, and it would obviously be ideal for them to extend private practice once again at the expense of the N.H.S.

Management have promised that they will build an aqua therapy pool at Birch Hill hospital where children will have to go if the Children's Hospital is closed. This will cost £600,000, the figure that they say will be saved from one year's closure. If the childrens' hospital is closed it will mean that mentally and physically handicapped children will be treated with medically ill children. Obviously healthy handicapped children have different needs from sick children. Both these hospitals are essential facilities and both should be saved.

REGIONAL ROUND UP

Bolton

The Tory Council in Bolton (with a majority of 1) announced plans for 6 Bolton nurseries: job cuts now, then complete closure in April. There was a big response from teachers' unions and parents. Schools and nurseries were leafletted, public meetings held, letters in the evening paper, and when the council met the public gallery was flooded with angry local people. Surprised at the sudden, well co-ordinated response the council has been forced to back down, and their plans have been scrapped. It just shows what can be done when we fight back !

Levenshulme

In Levenshulme, local women have produced a plan for a Well Woman Clinic in the new health centre. To get a copy of the plan contact Hilary, 7 Buckhurst Road, Levenshulme.

Trafford

:fford Council is attempting to implement cuts in a particularly vicious way. ir plans so far have included issuing ındancy notices to part-time teachers :h will mean losing the equivalent of 90 . time teachers. They plan to close ools, old people's homes, nurseries, and :r institutions, cut down on other vices and increase charges for remaining vices.

people of Trafford are not accepting the ıation but organising a mammoth fight. londay 3rd. December 2,000 people took : in a demonstration against the cuts. the local authority manual unions were sented, many parent/teacher Associations part, there were representatives of l factories and all the Trades Councils present. North and South Trafford eges of Further Education closed for the

othman, President of Altrincham, Sale strict Trades Council said that the turn- was a good start and that they hoped to nise a bigger demonstration on a Saturday rnoon.

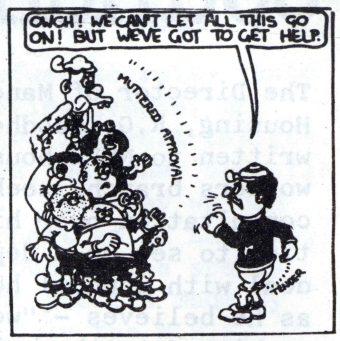
l women, realising that the brunt of the will affect them were particularly well esented on the demonstration. The aign now plans to encourage pensioners disabled groups to get involved, as they also be severely affected by the cuts.

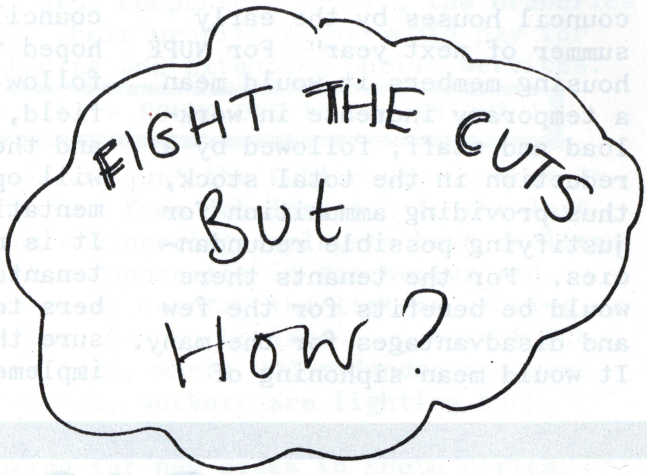
H OUT FOR ANTI-CUTS ACTIVITIES IN FORD - THEY NEED YOUR SUPPORT.

Ancoats

ıursday, 13th December, Ancoats Action ittee was set up at a public meeting at New Cross Labour Club. The aim of committee is to stop the Casualty ice from being changed from a 24 hour ident and emergency service to a 9 - 5 ice for walking wounded patients. Last 47,000 patients used Ancoats casualty it is already evident that there is ıg local support for keeping a 24 hour ice.

ıore information, contact Bill Gibson, ıts Hospital.





For many people making the jump from general opposition against the cuts to specific actions presents lots of problems. It is easy enough to get motions passed against the cuts at the average union meeting. What is much harder is moving to the next step.

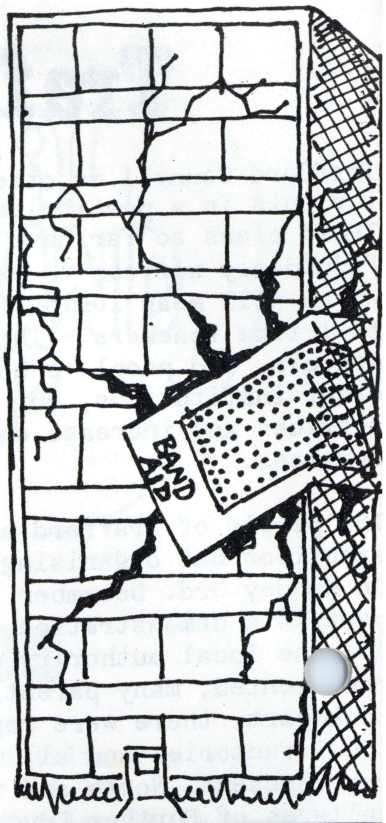
One way is through the safety reps. organisation which has developed in many workplaces. Union Safety Reps. have become adept at organizing around health and safety issues in the same way that Shop Stewards organise around wages and conditions.

We need to win the idea that safety reps' concern for their members' health and well being should not stop at the 'factory gate'. When workers are taken ill or injured at work it is the local hospital which tries to pick up the pieces. If the cuts mean that hospitals are less efficient at patching up workers (and they do!) it is an attack on working conditions just as direct as a wage cut.

Safety Reps. should be pressed to see it as part of their function to contact shop stewards in their local hospital for discussions about how to jointly fight the cuts.

In a similar way cuts in the fire service threaten workers' lives in local workplaces and reps. should also contact their local F.B.U. organisation.

council house sales



The Director of Manchester Housing, R.G. Goodhead, has written to NUPE housing workers branch, seeking urgent consultation over his intention to set up a department to deal with council house sales, as he believes - "we will be committed to the sale of council houses by the early summer of next year" For NUPE housing members it would mean a temporary increase in workload and staff, followed by a reduction in the total stock, thus providing ammunition for justifying possible redundancies. For the tenants there would be benefits for the few and disadvantages for the many. It would mean siphoning of valuable funds allocated to improvement programmes and transferring finance to provide for increased demand for local authority mortgages. It would open the way to local rich landlords having the freedom to buy up groups of council houses and taking over council functions. It is hoped that Manchester will follow the example of Sheffield, where both the council and the unions have said they will oppose the actual implementation of this legislation. It is now up to the Unions, tenants and Labour Party members to start pushing to make sure that it does not get implemented here.

DISABLED

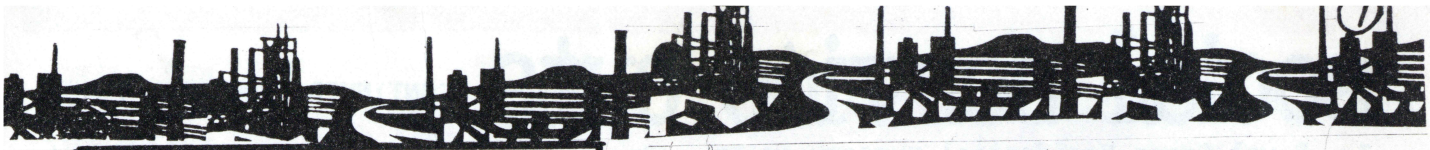
During an economic slump and the ensuing cuts in public spending, it is always those least able to cope and adjust who are asked to do precisely that. Just consider what this means to one of the various socially disadvantaged groups in our society - the disabled and unemployed. In this instance I am referring to the many people who are assessed as having some degree of physical or mental disability, but are nevertheless quite capable of holding down a job.

To be disabled and unemployed in an atmosphere of cuts is especially hard. When the economy is booming, or at least stable, employers are far more ready to employ those who are unable to achieve maximum output in return for their wages; As one employer put it - "a large firm would often write off ' a number of salaries to help out'. This happened up to 3 or 4 years ago, but how different the situation is now ! I work on the Disablement Resettlement Section of an Employment office and have seen how employers have become more and more selective in filling their vacancies, and also reducing considerably the actual number of people they take on to fill existing vacancies (so much for Mrs. Thatcher's free enterprise / more jobs theory !)

Every employee has to justify his/her employment for the price of their wage packet. To quote one disabled person, "What chance have I got when ten fit people have been interviewed already ?" The end result is that in the huge cake of 1½ million unemployed - a larger slice than ever before are disabled.

Ultimately what we have are the disadvantaged sections of our society being the first to be affected by 'cuts'.

Obviously if the person is also emotionally or mentally handicapped, the outcome can be even more tragic. Its up to all of us to fight to prevent further cuts in our standard of living. In the public sector we are best equipped to help those like the disabled who are frequently unable to lobby on their own behalf. We must join with the private sector to ensure maximum resistance at all levels.



INDUSTRIAL MUSCLE NEEDED

blic sector workers will not win their ght to defend services without the pport of the engineers, miners, car rkers etc. They can however start e action with a series of local ghtening strike actions - a couple of urs, half a day and so on. This uld free groups of public sector rkers to hold factory gate meetings d leaflet to win support and eventual dustrial action by the private sector.

at price are we prepared to pay in der that our society is run solely the basis of profit rather than the ds of the majority ? Accept massive mployment, cuts that kill ? roughout Europe and internationally there a recession. Bosses and Governments erywhere, with no real fight from union aders, are driving down workers living andards in order to restore profitability, lving the economic crisis at our expense.

say public spending should be boosted the expense of profits. People before ofits !

answer to the question: can we afford it? ere will the money come from for houses, rvices and jobs for all ? The money is ere in the economy. The bulk of council use rents and local authority spending es to paying interest charges on loans om banks and finance houses. Think of the ssive profits made by these companies and eculators at our expense. We should demand that Labour councils refuse to raise rents and rates which hit working people, and refuse to pay the massive interest charges. Not isolated councillors, but many councils throughout the country. This way we can build massive local support as in Lambeth, rather than relying on behind the scenes manoevres. Think of the profits made by the industries which supply the N.H.S., e.g. Drug companies, I.C.I., the breweries etc. Their profits alone would pay for restoring and extending public services.

I.C.L. - ROUND ONE to the UNIONS !

It is not just the Public Sector that is suffering from job losses. In the last month engineering employers have declared 5,000 redundancies in Manchester and across the country the list is growing - Shotton, Corby, Leyland .... but at ICL Dukinfield, where 900 redundnacies were announced, workers are fighting back. They have found that management are looking for new sites in South Africa, more profits can be made there because the apartheid regime keeps a non-unionised labour force on low wages. Through fighting to spread an overtime ban to the rest of ICL and trying to gain solidarity action, the workers have forced ICL to put back its closure plans for 28 days. With a limited victory under their belts. Dukinfield workers are now in a position to build links with other Manchester factories facing redundancies and develop a district wide fight for the right to work.

SOCIAL SERVICE CUTS

ichael Heseltine, Minister of State has nnounced that the Rate Support Grant will e 61% - the same as last year. The overnment are assuming inflation of 13% it is more likely to be above 20%) and uts pf 2½% in local authority spending. f councils accept their suggestions and hey are right, it will mean rate rises of 4.4%. It is more likely however, if ervices and staffing levels are to be aintained that it will mean rate ncreases of between 20 and 25%. t present Manchester Borough (!) Council re saying that they are not making any uts, just adapting services to meet changing demands.
This means:

1. Ellerslie Children's home will close Fenna will re-open to compensate for some of the places.

2. Northenden Road Girls School to close. New girls unit to be opened at Mobberley Boys School - some of the staff are to move over.

"Anxious frown now, I think, sir. This is a distressed area".

social service cuts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7.

3. Royal Green Residential nursery is to become a Day Nursery with an emergency bed unit - this will mean some redundancies.

Manchester has decided to use its reserves and raise £1¼ million by selling a painting to avoid cuts before next April but may run out of money, in which case they plan to:

1. Reintroduce home help charges of £1 per session, which will cut down demand, rather than raise money.

2. Charge for day nurseries - which will have little effect as 90% of cases are social priority which will remain free.

In areas like Rochdale and Stockport where less direct methods of cutting back are being used, an all round deterioration in services is likely to occur. Fewer staff, through no replacements, means worse services. Buildings are likely to be badly maintained. The introduction of charges for services as in Rochdale, and threatened in Manchester, rarely raises money as the system is expensive to administer, but it does mean a fall in demand. In Trafford cuts are particularly extreme and are geared to a heavy cutback of services to children. Elsewhere it is services to the elderly and handicapped which are particularly affected.

One of the ways the Tories are using to divide the working class is to make particularly fierce attacks on the position of women. Basically they are saying that in order to solve the unemployment problem, women should stop doing paid work. This in turn will give them a free supply of labour to care for children, the sick, the elderly and the handicapped. Obviously the clock can not be turned back. Most women work because they need to, both from the financial point of view and because they feel isolated at home. We have to ensure that all men and women fight to keep and improve employment possibilities for women and do n not let the Tories divide us by solving mens problems at the expense of women.

Women in Manchester are active in this ght At the moment they are busy campaigning to ensure that the Corrie Anti-abortion bill does not become law, as this will restrict women's choice even more about whether and and when they wish to have children. In Levenshulme, women are fighting for a Well Woman Clinic in the new health centre. They are not only saying save our services, but give us the kind of services we want and give us more control in running them. The Levenshulme Well Women's Campaign have recently produced a plan for the clinic, copies are available from Hilary, 7, Buckhurst Road, Levenshulme, M/c. 19. 225 9782.

In the last couple of weeks the Minister of State announced that the Duchess of York Hospital would not lose its surgical facilities. There were many local women who fought for that victory.

FOR A UNITED FIGHT AGAINST THE CUTS, WOMENS' DEMANDS ARE A MUST

Protection of paid work for women

The right to choose whether and when to have children.

Nurseries

Well Women Clinics

Defend and extend welfare services

JOIN US IN THE FIGHTBACK AGAINST THE CUTS AND FOR SERVICES THAT REALLY MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS.

* HELP DISTRIBUTE THIS BULLETIN.
* AFFILIATE TO MANCHESTER FIGHTBACK, DETAILS INSIDE OR DIRECT FROM US AT BOX M, 1st FLOOR, 59 WHITWORTH STREET, MANCHESTER 1. 236 4058. (Ask for Dave Carter.)

P&P Manchester Fightback.

Manchester Fightback